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Change 2.0

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Editor's Desk

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Our lives sometimes feel as if they are running past us. In our efforts to keep up with demands of work and home/family, the issues related to

change almost recede even as they continue to exert forces on our world. This poses a philosophical question: when does change begin to change? Put another way, might we consider whether and how much the forces of change—the pace, scope, and pervasiveness—are themselves changing? Less than philosophical, it may be self-evident that something about change is changing, and we appear to be headed for a new era of change that will require even more adaptation in order to resolve it to our lives. Or as an actor once said in a famous movie role, “you gonna get your mind right.”¹

Let's call this “change 2.0” to borrow a now well-worn appellation. Rather than focus on this idea representing a new form of change, I prefer to think of it as change that is internally driven rather than responding to exogenous shocks from the environment, to borrow a term from the study of economics.² This new type of change is proactive rather than reactive. It is change for which we have been through the early phases of the change process and now stand at stage four, ready for the action part of change at any time.³ If this is the case, perhaps it is less about a new type of change and instead a new approach to change in ourselves. It can mean that we have reached an equilibrium stage in our response to change: it will happen, I will lead and follow. One of the hallmarks of change 2.0 is the speed with which it comes upon us, to the point that even those resistant to change have less of a reason to obstruct. Put another way, when constant change becomes the norm, what then represents change? What is deviation from the norm, when deviation from the norm is the only constant? I once had a philosophy professor who, when asked in the introductory course, “What is philosophy?” replied, “It is the study of the chairness of the chair.” Obscure, yes.⁴ But wrong, no. If “chairness” captures the essence of the chair, and is ripe for study, then also the changing nature

of change informs the very definition of change. Hence change 2.0. Are you ready for it?

Here at *LL&M*, our columnists certainly are. I have commented more than once on what a remarkable group of columnists we have. They make their quarterly deadlines with little or no prodding and are able time and again to develop timely, interesting and readable articles with clear relevance. John Lubans has the subject of change in mind in his piece about the end of one's professional career and how that change affects one's life as well as the profession. But more than that, leaders must bring the group along with them while navigating the change. This means coaching, upping skill levels, maintaining productivity during the change process, and managing the many and several organizational details that help staff to better embrace change. And indeed, change is continuing at an accelerated pace, as noted below.

LVP

A new report from OCLC, just released, is a sobering reminder that all around us the information landscape is changing.⁵ The report clarifies what many have known for a while: that libraries are increasingly at risk of reduced relevance due to the explosion of information access points on the web as well as better organized access to that information. Specifically, the report refers to concern about the library value proposition (LVP) as perceived not only by users but also by holders of the purse strings—the funding bodies that we have to keep informed about the value of libraries in the community and in the research setting. Libraries, supported by ALA, have always worked to demonstrate their effectiveness, high use, and indeed their value. However the idea of the LVP comes as funding bodies are under budget stress unlike any seen for decades, and to a level beyond anyone's current lifetime. Include advances in technology associated with storage, distribution, and access of all types of information and there is no question the LVP is weighed differently than in the past. It is also easier than ever for funding bodies to point to the ubiquity of the web and resolve to downplay the library's role in providing access to information.

Specifically, the report tells libraries that they must find new ways to demonstrate effectiveness, find staff members with skill sets outside those of professional

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librarians, and augment or even replace the current service profile on which libraries have operated for decades. Heady stuff? It is enough to bring more just a little of the unsettling feeling one gets when confronted by a insecure future. But libraries have the ability to respond, and library leaders will up the ante as they work to demonstrate better the library value proposition in new ways.

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